

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Tadayoshi Tamasaka, 68, former general store employee, Lower Paia, and current grocery store owner, Kuau

"Well, [at Paia Mercantile] we sell grocery, gasoline, all kinds of small notions, belt, buckles, threads, safety pins, and yard goods, cloth, shoes, shirts and trousers--working and good kind--so they used to carry most anything in small quantity. Olden days...[once] you get one customer, they mostly 100 percent with you, you see, so you got to carry everything. We cannot be specialized like nowadays, you know....Today, the customer don't have obligation to you and you don't have obligation so you can be specialized and sell only one thing but those days, no. One year, whole year, they stick with you."

Tadayoshi Tamasaka, Japanese, was born February 22, 1912, in Hana, Maui. His father was an employee of Kaeleku Sugar Company. When Tamasaka was six years old, his father moved the family to Pauwela and became an independent pineapple grower. In 1925, his father quit the pineapple business and went to work at Paia Mill. They lived in Kaheka Camp.

In 1927, Tamasaka started working for Paia Mercantile, a large, general merchandise store in Lower Paia. He lived behind the store in housing provided for store employees. Tamasaka had a variety of duties ranging from floor sweeping to taking orders in the plantation camps.

Tamasaka left Paia Mercantile in 1946 in order to open his own store in Kuau, a town located one mile east of Lower Paia. He still operates the store today. He and his wife, Mitsuku, live in a house next to the store. When not in the store, Tamasaka is active in the Kahului Merchants' Association.

Tape No. 7-71-1-80 and 7-72-1-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Tadayoshi Tamasaka (TT)

April 22, 1980

Kuau, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Tadayoshi Tamasaka. Today is April 22, 1980 and we're at his home in Kuau, Maui.

Okay, Mr. Tamasaka, can you tell me when you were born?

TT: February 22, 1912.

WN: And where were you born?

TT: Hana, Maui.

WN: What was your father doing in Hana?

TT: Working for that sugar mill--working as a sugar processor. They never used to make white sugar, only brown sugar, I know he was working for that department because every now and then he used to bring home lump of sugar for us.

WN: This was the Hana Sugar Company?

TT: Shee, I think the original name was Kaeleku Sugar Company, you know.

WN: Kaeleku?

TT: Yeah. I don't think there was any Hana Sugar Company. I think it was the Kaeleku.

WN: And what kind of house did you folks live in over there in Hana?

TT: The place where I was born was outside of Hana proper, you know. Used to be, I think, a first-class house in those days, you know. Of course, at least we had wooden floor in the house. It's comprised of one master parlor and kitchen and bed, eh, that's all.

WN: You mean the other houses in the camp weren't that nice?

TT: Well, most of them is made by the plantation so they all about equal, you know, in Hana.

WN: So you had four of you in the family....or four children?

TT: In Hana?

WN: Yeah.

TT: No, only two.

WN: Oh, I see. Then when you folks moved they had two more children.

TT: You see, we had one---I have a sister but I never seen her. She was born in Japan.

WN: Oh, older sister?

TT: Yeah. They left her back and then they was supposed to go back within couple years, you know, but the soil was so good that the roots start growing that they couldn't be transplanted to Japan. (Chuckles) They had no ways of going home again. Like most Japanese people, they had in mind to stay maybe three or four years and go back but, you know, how could they go back because they earn the money, they send it to Japan for the family. So when the time is ready to go back, they don't have money so they have to work for another year again so finally they didn't go back to Japan for such a long time.

WN: Do you know how much your father was making at the mill? Did he ever tell you?

TT: No. At that time I was such a small boy yet, I didn't ask how much.

WN: What else do you remember about that area?

TT: Hana?

WN: Hana area and growing up.

TT: Oh, Hana I think used to be one of the center of the first immigrants, you know. A lot of people came up in Kipahulu and Hana. I think that at that time they had about three sugar mills in Hana, you know, in that section--Kipahulu, Kaeleku and I think they had one small one in Hana, too.

WN: Uh huh.

TT: Because even a lot of people that living here [Paia area] today--lot of these people migrate from Hana, you know. A lot of people that I know.

WN: Was it mostly Japanese?

TT: Yeah, mostly Japanese.

WN: In Hana do you remember mostly Japanese living there?

TT: Yeah, it's either Japanese or Hawaiians because Hawaiians were there already anyway.

WN: Do you know if there were Hawaiians working in the sugar company that you remember?

TT: Not that I know. As I said, I was just a small boy at that time.

WN: So the children that you played with in Hana, were they mostly Japanese?

TT: Yeah.

WN: So you moved when you were about six years old?

TT: Yeah.

WN: To Pauwela.

TT: Yeah.

WN: Do you know why your father decided to move to Pauwela?

TT: Well, I asked him one time and he said, "Well, he wanted... " (Break in tape)...you know, and then try to make a go of himself, make it easy for us but that wasn't so. The pineapple business was very hard. During that particular year that I know, most of those small growers were almost bankrupt because of the--now, I know why--because of the--what you call?--mealy bugs, you know. At that time lot of people didn't know and then everything was done by hand, you know. The biggest machinery that they had was the mule or the horse to dig, eh. They didn't have any tractors or anything.

WN: Were there a lot of people doing independent pineapple growing?

TT: Oh, yeah, there were from Haiku, Pauwela, way up to almost as far as what is now Kailua. There's lot of land where pineapple was raised in that hillside. They had a crude way of....some people had trucks, most came on wagons so you can just imagine how fast they can deliver the pineapple and it seems to me those days used to be rainy, rainy, rainy, you know, nothing but rain. More so than now, I think.

WN: And who would your father supply? What company?

TT: Libby [Libby, McNeill & Libby]. At that time, originally, I think was called Pauwela Fruit Cannery [Pauwela Pineapple Company]. Then

Libby took it over. Before my parents started pineapple, they had a cannery in Pawela but when my father came, the cannery was where Libby is now.

WN: How big was your father's field?

TT: Shee, I think about five, six acres, I think. The land is still there. I know my way around, you know.

WN: What's it being used for now?

TT: Oh, they have that nursery there now. The junction of, you know, the road there. Not even a mile below of Libby Cannery.

WN: Did you---what kind of work did you do to help your father?

TT: Well, during that--we used to go to--even after school we didn't have any time--we used to go to Haiku School. After that we used to go to Japanese School, then we have to walk back so by the time we walk back, it's almost dark already, those days. No bus or anything you have to walk. Rain or shine you have to walk.

WN: How far?

TT: Oh, it's about two miles, I think. We couldn't help. Anyway, you couldn't do much, you know, in the pineapple field those days. If you were big boy, all right, but still young, you know.

WN: Still young yet?

TT: Yeah.

WN: Six years old, yeah?

TT: Yeah, six, seven years old.

WN: Did your father have any workers under him, working for him?

TT: No. We were solely independent. My father and my father, that's all. He couldn't afford to hire people, you know. The acreage is too small, too, you know. Those days was really hard. It's not like now. They didn't have any place to borrow money, you know, so they'd rely a lot on their friends if they can help them. At that time my father didn't have any relatives--blood relatives--here and certainly no marriage relatives at that time yet because I was small so he couldn't make a lot of good with the pineapple so he says, "Well, I move to sugar cane, go work for M.A. [Maui Agricultural] Company." So, we had to move.

WN: Okay, before we get to the move, what kind of house did you folks live in Pauwela side?

- TT: Oh, it's one by twelve---those days was one by twelve [boards]. Let me see now, one by twelve and then we shared with one more duplex house, you know, and then kitchen was below.
- WN: Underneath?
- TT: No, no, separate building and dirt floor, you know, and then usually they cooked most of the thing with wood. It's not like---no conveniences like now.
- WN: You didn't have kerosene at that time?
- TT: We had kerosene. Some of the foods were cooked on kerosene stove, but still then, they want to save every penny so lot of times they used wood because wood is plenty.
- WN: Were there a lot of people living in the same area, like a camp?
- TT: No, no. Only two families, you know. Up the cannery, lot of people used to live but we're in the center of the pineapple field with two families.
- WN: And the other family had a field near by?
- TT: Yeah, that's right. Now I realize that--at that time I didn't know--but after that I realized that I think they leased the land and the house, you know, because the house was there. We didn't build the house so they must have leased the house and the land from somebody, but I don't know who owned it. Till today I don't know who owned the house and the land at that time when I asked my father. In fact I was too young so I didn't know any better to ask.
- WN: You said you went to Haiku School, yeah?
- TT: Yeah.
- WN: About how many pupils had in that school?
- TT: Shee, I have no idea how many but I know it's a fairly big school. We had people come all the way from---Kaupakalua used to have school, see. Huelo had school. Keanae had school, but Kaupakalua and Huelo I think seventh and eighth grade they used to come, you know, because I know one of my friends walked the seventh and eighth and all the high schools here. He walked from Kaupakalua and come down to Haiku. That was a chore for him every day, rain or shine.
- WN: Most of the kids that went to these schools, were they children of pineapple growers?
- TT: Mostly, because at that time there was only pineapple. Haiku used to be only pineapple, nothing else. Pineapple, I think, hired a

lot of people because I recall that during the summer months a lot of ladies came from Hilo, Olaa, Curtistown, you know, the people was from there. They used to have dormitory in Haiku. Libby didn't have dormitories but Haiku Fruit [and Packing Company], they had dormitories.

WN: So people who worked for Libby, could they stay in the Haiku Fruit dormitory?

TT: No, they could not. Libby was a small cannery, you know. I think maybe three, four ginacas, I think. Haiku was a bigger one.

WN: I was wondering how you folks got your goods, you know, groceries like that, living in Pauwela.

TT: There was a store, Kaupakalua--Hanzawa [Store], we bought from them.

WN: Did you folks go to Hanzawa Store or did he come...

TT: My father used to go maybe once or twice a month, you know, to buy and Pauwela, they used to have small stores, too. They had several stores. You ran short, you have to go buy there, you have to pay cash. You go to the master store and you charge it, see?

WN: What store?

TT: The store that you deal mostly like Hanzawa, you know, you charge it.

WN: Oh, oh.

TT: Olden days used to be mostly trust, more people trust each other, to help each other before than now.

WN: So your father would get paid in lump sum when he harvested the pineapple?

TT: Yeah, that's right. That's the only time they get paid. They sell the fruit to them and they get paid. So the amount that they get paid from the mill, they had to pay for groceries so by the time you paid the groceries, maybe if you lucky, you get few bucks left. If you unlucky, if the bugs get before you to the pineapple, you get less, so you owe them. You work one whole year and then you owe again, you see, and each year if it lags about couple years, you have to give it up because they have no ways of financing.

WN: So your father after he got paid for harvesting the pineapple, he had to pay the store for his groceries and sometimes he owed more than he got?

TT: That's right.

WN: Is that the reason why he quit pineapple?

TT: Yeah, and then one of our---according to my father, one of his friends told him that you cannot make a go that way so he loan him some money, you know, then he paid the store, he cleared everything and then he moved out to the sugar mill, Maui Agricultural [Company].

WN: This was in about 1925?

TT: Yeah, about that.

WN: So where did you folks live when you moved from Pauwela to Maui Agricultural [Company]?

TT: Oh, we moved to a camp called Kaheka. A camp full of rocks. Yeah, had so much rocks.

WN: What kind of rocks?

TT: Boulder rocks. Plantation is smart, too. They don't want to give their prime land for housing. They got to raise cane so I figure that most of the camps that I seen, they all full of rocks, you know. In fact one year--and this was kind of way back, later--in order to clear the rocks in the Kaheka Camp, the plantation put a railroad track in there to load the rocks to haul away because at that time they had a small crusher, they need to crush rocks so was fortunate for Kaheka Camp which was the nearest so they start picking up all the rocks. So the camp came little nicer, you know, with all the rocks gone. Even in Paia Camp, I notice that. They make the houses in the gulch there where they cannot raise sugar cane, you know, but today they have equipment and they can take away the rocks. Olden days, you cannot, you know.

WN: About how many houses were there in Kaheka Camp?

TT: Oh, I'm quite sure they must have over 100 homes at that time. A hundred homes means big population, you know, those days. Not like today, not like 3.1 or 4 to a family, you know. Those days, the average is five and up, five, six, seven. We were about the smallest family anyway. Used to be fairly big camp.

WN: What did you do to have a good time growing up over there?

TT: Oh, in Kaheka?

WN: Yeah.

TT: Oh, we played baseball. We go fishing in the so-called Punawai Reservoir, you know. We used to hook fish. Nothing much to do.

WN: What kind fish had in the reservoir?

TT: Goldfish.

WN: Oh, yeah?

TT: 'O'opus, you know, those days. Or not we used to go pick guava, you know. We used to go pick pā-nini. We used to play baseball in the camp or intersection. We used to come down to Lower Paia, Mantokuji grounds, over there, to play ball.

WN: Oh, you folks didn't have a field up there?

TT: In the camp, no. We used to play on the road. That's about the best place we had. So we used to come down to Lower Paia Saturdays after Japanese School or Sunday to play ball, football.

WN: You folks had organized league or just...

TT: No, no organized league. Come to think of it now, I don't see why we didn't go to the schools to play, you know.

WN: You mean Paia School?

TT: Yeah. We usually come to Lower Paia or somewhere else to play in the small, crowded space. At one time Paia School was big school. I stayed there couple of years anyway, in Paia School.

WN: I was wondering, did Kaheka children--did they play with--did they mingle with Paia Camp children and other camps?

TT: Yeah, uh huh. Usually when we play sport was that maybe certain side of the camp play against a certain side of the camp, you know, then the certain side of the camp play the certain side of Paia, you know, because transportation is one of the worst things. You have to walk, you know, no cars. Even telephone, now, practically every home has a telephone. I think at that time there were only two telephones in the camp. One was a ditchman, you know, and one was a telephone donated by every people that pay about fifteen or twenty cents, you know, so community telephone, you know, because nobody could put in their home so for emergency sake, they used to have one, I think. Everybody used to divide up for the telephone. The ditchman--plantation had the telephone, see. It's really altogether different world--seems like a different world from today, you know, the living conditions, but at the time you didn't think nothing of it. You enjoyed, you know. I think a lot of people enjoyed more in those days than today now, you know. They had more things to look forward to in those days. Today, practically everything you got by pushing a button, you know, so people don't appreciate things today. Those days we going back, you know, like for Christmas from Pauwela we go to Haiku School--Haiku School was in Pauwela--then from over there we walk up to Haiku for Christmas tree to get maybe couple candy and one apple

then we had to go back home to Libby and if you don't watch out, you have to go around the long way because if you cut short, some big boys might, you know, stay there and take our candy so we had to hide and walk another extra two, three miles before we can reach home safely but we enjoyed it. We look forward but today, I don't know. Today you give candy, they tell you, "What, this kind candy we eat everyday." So people don't appreciate a lot of things today. Olden days, lot of people appreciate everything.

WN: I was wondering in Kaheka I heard there are a lot of Okinawans living in Kaheka.

TT: Yeah, we had a lot of--in fact when we first came Kaheka, we stayed way up where the few Puerto Ricans were living, Puerto Ricans and Portuguese. Then my father applied for new home, and when they build the new home we came down--was about the center of the camp--then right around there, our neighbors were mostly all Okinawans. Let me see, two Tamanahas on the side, one Arakaki back, one Tanahara in front and back was Tamanaha again, you know. We had a lot of Okinawa-ken there but they're nice people to live with.

WN: Did they slaughter pig, too?

TT: Yeah, those days they used to slaughter pig, you know. In fact, my father didn't used to slaughter the pig but we used to raise. We used to raise pigs, we used to raise rabbits, chickens, you know. Now and then I see the---like Little House on the Prairie last night I was watching, you know, they have chickens and all those farm animals. Gee, I figure that's the life again, you know.

WN: You folks used to sell the chickens?

TT: No, for home use. Then one good thing was each payday, my father used to buy one can of senbei, you know, the five-gallon size. We were fortunate because we had only three in the family and we still had one can senbei whereas lot of people have seven in the family, eight in the family, they still buy only one can, see, so in proportion we used to have more than the other people that had more children. Same thing like when they buy the meat. Now, come to think of it, those days they used to buy meat and everybody used to go for round steak because they say it's a good piece because it doesn't have bone, you know. But the meat is tough. Tough or no tough, it doesn't matter because you're not going to eat that way anyway. You're going to slice it and eat with vegetable, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

TT: It's only for flavor and then sometimes we used to sit on the table and I used to janken po for the meat with my sister. My father used to get mad. He said, "You're not supposed to do that, eat what we give you."

WN: Vegetables, you folks had your own garden?

TT: Oh, yeah, we had garden plus plantation field used to have a lot of vegetables. Those days plantation didn't use herbicide, you know, so somebody raise squash, somebody raise potato and then they share with each other.

WN: This is within the sugar...

TT: Yeah, in the field, you know. End of the field, then right here they plant tomato or whatever they can. When they water the field, the water goes to the end so it is automatically watered and they didn't used to use herbicide or anything so it's not . . . even mustard cabbage, all those things, and sometimes they used to get seed, they used to throw 'em and then make sure they don't cut the grass where the thing growing. Vegetable we used to plant at home and then what they bring home from the field and if they bring home too much, it's all barter system again. You get too many squash, you give your neighbor, you know. If the neighbor has too much carrot, he gives you carrot, you know.

WN: How about meat for vegetable? You folks did that too?

TT: Mostly was meat used to be buy, you know. Peddler used to come around, you know, but even pigs when they slaughter, lot of people they share each other because that's too much and you have no refrigeration to keep so I know what they used to do was the lard....they would cook the oil and then they pour the fat over the pork to keep the pork. And they used to salt the pork and then....no refrigeration in those days and that's the only way they can keep.

WN: How long would it keep?

TT: Oh, they keep it for three months, six months, salted, you know, salt pork. Coming back to that, boy, if today the Board of Health says that's zero points, you know. They slaughter anyplace, you know, but that's the only way they knew how to make a living, I guess. It's something like when you see the old cowboy picture or the Indian picture, I always think they had a rough time, but so did our parents, you know. Because of them we live little bit in luxury. Maybe our children will be living in better conditions, you know, but we don't know whether they are....to live in luxury, that doesn't mean that you're happy, you know. Today I wonder what makes people happy. I don't know. Maybe if you give them a million dollars, that's the only thing they come happy, you know.

WN: Maybe not even that.

TT: Because you take like birthday party, they assume that they going to get something good.

WN: I was wondering what kind of festival or celebration or things that they had in Kaheka?

TT: I still remember that....shall we start with New Year, we supposed to take a bath. My father used to tell us that. I said, "We just took a bath last night, that's December 31st."

He said, "New Year, you're supposed to take a bath, clean your body for the New Year."

So we used to and then maybe we get one apple or one orange and maybe, you know, sushi and maybe that's when they cook and maybe they put little bit more pork than ordinary time to cook the vegetable and maybe we get a bottle of soda or something. They used to have a meeting place and we used to go...

WN: In Kaheka?

TT: Yeah. Kaikan, you know, that's usually where people meet, yeah?

WN: Uh huh.

TT: And I know that everybody else take a bath and then they go to the next neighbor and they say, "Happy New Year" and then they drink sake or tea or whatever and then they express their thanks that the year wasn't so bad and they hope that they get a better year coming, better crops and then the neighbors go around for one whole day or so. Then I remember the next one is only Emperor's Birthday, Tenchō-setsu, and same thing, they tell you you got to go take a bath, you know, and then they go to this kaikan again and you get a few candies or whatever it is and of course, that day is different. You don't go to neighbor's house or anything. You just go there and come home and finish. Then Christmas, at home we didn't have anything. Only school, but school is over so we used to go to the auditorium and they give us candy and apple.

WN: Had churches in Kaheka?

TT: No, no church, no.

WN: Were there any kind of occasions that the whole community would meet together for something?

TT: No, not that I recall.

WN: So Kaheka was mostly Japanese and Okinawans?

TT: Japanese, Okinawans. We had some Spanish and then Portuguese. We used to have one good friend, Robello, so we used to take some flowers sometimes to them. When they bake bread, we used to tell them, "Please bake some for us." (Laughs) The oven baked bread, you know. I used to love that bread. I still enjoy that bread.

WN: You get it now?

TT: No, it's only made by commercial people now. For several years--about five, six years ago--we used to buy everytime from Kula. They used to make that, you know. The lady that made died so we don't have any. Those days people lived more happily, you know. Everybody was brothers and sisters. That's what I feel. They share more. I think they share more things at that time than now.

WN: What kind of stores were there in Kaheka?

TT: There was only one in Kaheka. We used to call it camp store run by the Arakawas [Richard Arakawa, another interviewee]. Something similar to what I have now here. Little bread, little jelly, little bit soda, little bit candy, you know, but those days, practically every day some peddler used to come in the afternoon.

WN: What did he peddle? What did he have?

TT: Who?

WN: The peddler.

TT: Oh, they have fish. They used to bring meat, vegetable, canned goods, all kinds. All different people, you know, and then from Japanese stores, so called chūmon-tori [order takers]. They take order today and they deliver afterwards, you know, because nobody goes to the store to buy those days. You don't have car.

WN: So what stores did they come from?

TT: To Kaheka?

WN: Yeah.

TT: Paia Mercantile, Onishi [Shōkai], Japanese Mercantile from Kahului, you know, and then Paia Meat Market and then for fish, like that Fukuyoshi and all those people, they used to come.

WN: [Fukuyoshi Fish Market] from Lower Paia?

TT: Yeah.

WN: Altogether when you were growing up in Kaheka, how many different peddlers and chūmon-toris would you see in one day?

TT: One day, maybe one or two but there was such a thing as new month--tsukigawari--you know. What you buy today, you pay the following-following month business, you know. That day everybody rushed to come take order.

WN: They [all the stores] would come that same day?

TT: Same day.

WN: Like the 24th or something like that?

TT: Yeah.

WN: Oh, usually they would come different days?

TT: Yeah, they usually try to stagger the days to come. No sense everybody come the same day to take order.

WN: Yeah.

TT: But new month, you don't want to come one day or two day later than the other guy because the other guy going to get the best of you.

WN: Yeah.

TT: But to me, I don't know. It's only a matter of one month difference in your lifetime. It's always the same cycle, you know. If it's from 20 to 20, it's same. If 24 to 24, it's the same or the 30th of this month to 30th of....it's supposed to be the same but I don't know. Maybe that was their custom back in homeland or what. That, I don't know.

WN: So you're saying you don't really know why people rushed to buy things for the new month?

TT: That's right because you're not getting any cheaper or you're not getting free. Sooner or later you have to pay. Of course, it's going to be different the first month. You're going to pay almost sixty days later, right, but after that it's going to be same cycle. It's going to be same thirty days again but as I say, I don't know. You cannot fight the custom.

WN: Yeah. So one day every month, the first day of the new month, you said you see more people [order takers] than usual?

TT: That's right. In fact, later on when I start work for Paia Mercantile, I did the same thing too. New month....in order to get order faster, what I used to do was I used to tell the people, "Please write what you need so that I don't have to talk to you too long." And then lot of people were pat anyway--one bag rice, one tub shōyu, one bag flour, you know, all the---udon so much and the necessities. They eat about the same thing, same time, so---chicken feed, you know. One thing that I don't see nowadays is what we called "middling" that they used to feed the pigs. Nobody now handles this so I don't see that word "middling" now.

WN: But that used to be a big seller?

TT: Used to be because a lot of people raised pig and that used to be about the cheapest thing to feed the pig, you know.

WN: From Onishi do you remember Mr. Kochi [Chosoku Kochi, another interviewee]?

TT: Yeah, I still remember Mr. Kochi.

WN: What do you remember about him?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

TT: Mr. Kochi had a store, I think. I met him one time in Honolulu. I just happen to drop inside his store.

WN: Oh, yeah, yeah, later he did.

TT: Yeah, in Honolulu. I remember we were talking about the old days.

WN: Yeah. He's still there.

TT: In Honolulu?

WN: Yeah.

TT: He has the store yet?

WN: No, no.

TT: No, huh?

WN: He still lives in Honolulu.

TT: Yeah, I used to meet a lot of times with Shuji Watanabe from Japanese Mercantile.

WN: He used to go up to Kaheka?

TT: Yeah. Watanabe, Toshimi, you know, and from Kobayashi [Shōkai], Akiyama used to come up.

WN: Who did your parents buy from the most?

TT: We used to buy from Paia Mercantile because right after that I start work for Paia Mercantile.

WN: How did you get the...

TT: Paia Mercantile or I think was more from M.A. Company.

WN: Paia Store?

TT: Uh huh.

WN: How come from Paia Store?

TT: Paia Store because they extend the credit to you longer. You have collateral of your cane, you know, kompang.

WN: Oh, your father was kompang man?

TT: Yeah. That's a contract. They have so many acres that they take care, you know, and then they get paid so much a month and then after that if the harvesting is good, then they get bonus, see.

WN: So they get paid at the end of the harvest?

TT: Yeah, they get the small pay payday, too. They have a payday every month.

WN: After they harvest the cane and they get the big lump sum, they have to give back the money that they got per month?

TT: No, I think they don't have to give back, but that's calculated in the, you know--I think it's calculated because it's going to be hard if they pay and then they going to take it back.

WN: Oh, so they subtract the amount that they gave you?

TT: Yeah, I think, yeah.

WN: I see.

TT: So it's the same cycle again. Everytime you owe and the crop isn't good, you know, you still owe so you have no other place to buy. But then you need a kerosene stove, you go to the warehouse, you get paper from the store, you get the kerosene stove, then you get the bigger balance.

WN: Yeah.

TT: So in the olden days the people wasn't as free as--they wanted to go buy from some other stores, they had a hard time because they don't have the cash. And then they didn't know how to borrow money or nobody loaned them the money. But plantation used to lend them money because plantation got collateral. They worked for them already. They working for them, whereas Onishi or Paia Mercantile or Japanese Mercantile, if money was leftover, then they may have [gotten] paid. They may get but plantation [store] is [to be paid] first.

WN: So the kompang man when he got his bonus, did the plantation deduct what he owed to the store, too, automatically?

TT: Yeah, because you buy on a pledge that you---I don't know but I never questioned my father, you know. He said he had kompang dollar but he said, "This year wasn't so bad." He said he got little bit cash. I think they signed for it, I think. They have to sign a note or something because they cannot take off if they don't have any agreement.

WN: So 1927 you started to work for Paia Mercantile?

TT: Uh huh.

WN: How did you get the job?

TT: This person that came to take order, I told him I like to work for the store. It's my ambition that I like to work for the store, I like to learn whatever I can, then someday I'd like to own a store. Before I graduate--couple days before we graduate--those days they used to let us write composition. After I graduate from Paia School, they told us, "After you graduate from Paia School, what would you like to be." I distinctly know that I wrote that I'd like to work for some store and someday my dream is that I like to own my store, regardless of how big or small but I'd like to own one. That was on my mind. I didn't look into any other aspect of it. I think I went to work in the cane field for about two weeks.

WN: Doing what?

TT: Cut grass but I had no ambition of cutting grass because I had my mind set that I wanted to be a merchant. Even cannery I only went about three weeks of all my lifetime, you know.

WN: What was it about the store that you liked?

TT: I wanted something to be independent and that nobody tell me what to do. I figured that would be about the easiest thing for me, anyway, to go into. I didn't want to go into farming. With all my father's experience and failure, I said I didn't want to go into farming. I worked for Paia Mercantile.

WN: Did you have an easy time getting the job?

TT: Yeah, right after I graduate a few days later they tell me to come. I went down, they accept me so I came home, take my blanket, futon and went down [to Lower Paia]. I had to stay down there, sleep down there [i.e., employee housing]. I couldn't commute because I don't have car. That was an experience because I was very young at that time and I stayed only among older people so I had to sweep the floor and do everything because I was the youngest most of the time and Japanese custom, that.

WN: You were 15 years old then?

TT: Yeah. They figure I'm a kozō, you know, just like anything. Young guy you're supposed to sweep the floor. You're supposed to wake up little earlier than the rest of the guys and you're supposed to sleep little later than the other guys. I didn't mind. Was a good experience.

WN: What else did you do besides sweep the floor when you first started?

TT: Since I sweep the place and mop the floors of the home, I said, "I not going start cooking yet but I go wash the dishes." They used to take chance, you know, to cook. We used to cook and eat because couldn't go to the restaurant. We didn't have that much pay. In fact, when I started I think for a couple months of those days was free, you know.

WN: Oh, yeah?

TT: Yeah. No labor law, you know. It's Japan style. They say--what that?--minarai [apprentice]. In fact, you supposed to pay, they tell you, because they're going to teach you. So you had to do what they ask you. That time I have to wash my own clothes. Everybody wash their own clothes. For six months or so, I think, or almost one year I didn't cook but after that they tell me, "Well, you have to start rotate and cook."

I told them, "Well, if I have to rotate and cook, then we have to rotate and clean the house, too." So we rotate and clean the house.

WN: These were all bachelors?

TT: Yeah. Bachelors but we had only about three or four. The rest was family people. We had some Filipino. At one time we had to eat together with the Filipinos, you know. So today, as far as food is concerned, I'm not afraid of any kind of food.

WN: How many of you, employees, were there at Paia Mercantile?

TT: Shee, I know we had over ten people. We had several Filipinos, and Japanese--we had more than ten. I think we had about thirteen or fourteen at some instance, you know. They used to go out and take orders. They used to go to---they used to have one camp called Stable Camp and then Store Camp and then they used to call Honeymoon Camp, Hawaiian Camp and then they used to go to Keahua, Kailua, Old Kailua, Kaheka, Hamakua Poko, Haiku, Pahole, Haliimaile, Cornmeal and Libby Camp.

WN: Cornmeal, what is that, a camp?

TT: Yeah, it's the name of a camp. It's no longer there now. It's a camp between Makawao Town and Pukalani Junction. They used to have one camp over there.

WN: Who used to live over there?

TT: Those are pineapple people. Then they used to have Libby Camp. It was by Tanizaki in there. That's the place they sold--Libby sold to Pukalani some years back.

WN: Did you folks go Puunene too?

TT: We never used to go Puunene but after the war [World War II], lot of people moved from Paia to Puunene so some salesmen [order takers] used to go to Puunene but at that time had only about two or three salesmen [order takers] already. Paia Mercantile had shrunk, you know, so did all the Japanese taking order. That was an obsolete business already, taking orders.

WN: What kind of---what did Paia Mercantile sell?

TT: Well, we sell grocery, gasoline, all kinds of small notions, belt, buckles, threads, safety pins, and yard goods, cloth, shoes, shirts and trousers--working and good kind--so they used to carry most anything in small quantity. Olden days, you take like Japanese Mercantile, Onishi, Kobayashi, Ikeda, they all had the same because [once] you get one customer, they mostly 100 percent with you, you see, so you got to carry everything. We cannot be specialized like nowadays, you know. In other words, the store had obligation to the customer before because they are die-hard 100 percent customer for you so you had to get some kind drugs, too, you know. Today, the customer don't have obligation to you and you don't have obligation so you can be specialized and sell only one thing but those days, no. One year, whole year, they stick with you. We had lot of Filipino customers, too, so we had to buy iriko.

The merchandise at that time to me is real opposite, you know. I know when we used to buy we used to buy about five cases of cream, 100 case of iriko--100 pound iriko, you know, 100 case--about 50 or 75 case of tempura, fish cake, and of course, plenty rice, shōyu by the tub. Those days lot of people buy shōyu by tubs. Today, all buy by 12 ounce or 20 ounce. And flour used to be either 49 pounds or 98 pounds.

WN: Forty-nine or ninety-eight?

TT: Uh huh.

WN: How come not 50 and 100?

TT: That's how they used to pack, I think. Somehow, I don't know why. When I used to take order--I went out to take order, too--I know some house they say, "Okay, new month, three bag rice, one tub

shōyu and two bag flour, two bag feed, two bag middling." Standard order already every month, new month time. When we went to deliver, just like we work for the stevedore, carry, carry, carry, whole day.

WN: You folks had to do your own delivering?

TT: Yeah.

WN: You never had delivery boys?

TT: We used to have helper sometime, you know, but lot of times we used to share. Maybe the salesman [order taker] from Hamakua Poko is starting different day so he'll help us deliver Kaheka and Pulehu or Kailua. Then when he goes H. Poko, we all go help him, too.

WN: So you have your own delivery area?

TT: Yeah.

WN: Your own take order area?

TT: Yeah, uh huh.

WN: What was that?

TT: I was most like a pinch hitter for most of the time. I never had, you know and then toward the end I used to have Kaheka and Keahua. Those days we go deliver, the trucks are slow, hard riding, and we used to have trucks with no top at all. I said, "Why don't we put the top?"

The boss told us "It's hard to go against the wind with the top."

So I tell, "Well, coming back we get the top and we get the wind to back us up." (Laughs)

He don't go for that. He said, "No need the top." Lot of those days trucks, you buy the chassis and they used to make the truck for you, you know. They used to make, you know, so I guess if you design so that you got to put the top, cost more money so no windshield or nothing. If today, that thing no pass the inspection. No more windshield.

WN: What percentage do you think was take order and deliver customers and what percentage would you think was drop-in kind?

TT: Oh, what year are we talking about now?

WN: When you first started?

TT: Nineteen twenty-seven?

WN: Yeah.

TT: Oh, I'm quite sure I think about 75 percent is taking order or more. Only a few people drop in. Then after, a lot of people start owning a car, they share ride, then they have more drop-ins because a lot of time you want to buy shirt or shoes, it's hard since they're not accustomed to buying all the time, they don't know their size. Even the Filipinos what they used to do was they used to say two times your neck size is your waist [size] but that no hold water all the time, you know, but that's how they used to measure, you know. Two times your neck size. If you're [neck is] 15, your waist is supposed to be 30.

WN: Yeah, that works with me.

TT: It works with you?

WN: Yeah.

TT: Yeah, but not everybody. Sometimes little different but since no way of measuring, that's how they used to do.

WN: You mean the salesman going out to take order?

TT: Yeah.

WN: If people wanted pants, that's how they did it?

TT: Yeah, and then if they come to the store, I notice what they used to do was that they get the waist and they put it around the neck and they match it and they say, "Oh, this is the one."

WN: Why don't they just measure the neck and measure the waist?

TT: But the salesman doesn't have tape measure.

WN: Oh, he doesn't have?

TT: No, he doesn't carry and then at the home most of the people don't have that anyway, tape measure.

WN: Yeah.

TT: Maybe they may have---Japanese used to get that Japanese ruler. That's different again, you know. How they read is different again.

WN: Yeah. So when you went out and somebody wanted one pair of pants, how did you measure?

TT: Well, we used to tell them come down [to the store]. At that time, already, the 1930's and past, there were a few more cars, you know, and some people used to walk down to Paia which we don't do at all nowadays. Only the joggers who run but outside of that, nobody...

WN: I was wondering when you folks lived behind the store, what did the store supply you with?

TT: Oh, we had a room, free water, electricity--all the perquisites. Hot water, furo, but we had to take chance and make the furo. We were fortunate because we had some family people so the wives usually make the furo. Those days, lot of boxes were wooden boxes, not like today. Anytime if you need wood, on the way back from the camp you always can find wood. And then the plantation used to supply the employees with wood and kerosene.

WN: So you got the perquisites and about how much did you get paid?

TT: Oh, we used to get paid about a dollar a day which is equivalent to what plantation people was getting, one dollar, you know. At that time, I figure out, those days were harder to make a living than now, but today with us we all say we get harder time because we have too many luxury expenses now. Say, dollar a day, those days you have to work three and three-quarter days to earn one bag rice because rice was about \$3.75 a bag. Today minimum guy work one day, you can buy one bag rice, even say if the rice is \$24. You don't have to take one day to buy a bag of rice. Those days tuna was ten cents a can. A whole day you work you buy ten cans only. Today if you buy it--you work one day, even the tuna one dollar one can--you can buy over twenty cans. Everybody make more than twenty dollars but those days they didn't have the luxury of buying electrical appliances, TV or go bowling or go movies, you know, or go Dairy Queen or eat snacks. We get too much luxury, that's why they claim we have hard time but to me I think those olden people they had harder time to make a go than today because we have cars that eating up lot of our money now.

WN: From what time to what time was the store open?

TT: Store open well, those days I don't know if they had labor law or what. I wish they had at that time. We start from about 7:00 [a.m.] in the morning and Christmas time I know several nights we stay till about 11:00 [p.m.]. Of course when we work till 11:00 [p.m.] Christmas time, they used to supply us with dinner. Normal time I think was about 7:00 in the morning till about 5:00 [p.m.], 5:30 [p.m.] but we stay there so actually it's just like how I run my store. No busy, we close at 5:00 [p.m.] or 5:30 [p.m.]. If somebody come busy, busy, busy, we stay till 6:00 [p.m.], 6:15 [p.m.], 6:30 [p.m.], you know. They didn't have labor law those days, I think. No more such thing as overtime. And we work every other Sunday.

WN: The store opened every other Sunday?

TT: Every Sunday open but half [the employees] work, half...

WN: Oh, oh. I was wondering Paia Mercantile was it like a---did they have different departments within the store?

TT: Yeah, they used to have different departments. Later on they had dry goods, you know, but only different department was appliance. We were the first one to handle Easy Washer and Norge Refrigerator. We were about the first one on Maui to handle that. I went out to sell but this really was a hard thing to sell. Nobody was accustomed of buying those things yet.

WN: About when did you start selling those appliances?

TT: Gee, I have no idea. About 1934 or 1935, I think. I think the picture that we took is about 1937, I think. Couple of years before that we sold it.

WN: How come was hard to sell those things?

TT: Well, if you not accustomed to it, you don't want to get if it's big money. If it's couple dollars, all right, but a hundred dollars or so, nobody wants, because they never seen . . . merchandising is funny thing, you know. If your family or your neighbor don't have, people don't care. Why Hawaii people doesn't worry about buying fur coat is because your family, your friends don't have. Good reason is that somebody said they went to a friend's house, they saw a telephone in every room, so the next day they just came back and order telephone for every room too, because they get, why can't I get? That's the idea. So at that time people didn't have washing machine or refrigerator, they're not keen about getting it. That's where it's very hard to sell. But once you sell, maybe . . . I been on the road lot of time. I sold a lot of things. I sold for Paia Mercantile then after I graduate (chuckles) from there I went on my own and I sold World Book [Encyclopedia], I sold Stainless Steel flatware when the first Japan stuff came out, silverware, vacuum cleaner. I sold, but the thing is if your family has it or your friend has it, you want it too, because a good example is when I sold one cookware to one house, this is the kind of people that don't want to be stay back, so I went, I sold them so I went to this house and this person said, "Where did you sell around here?"

I said, "Good example, your next door neighbor bought the cookware."

She said to the husband, "We have to buy."

I asked, "Why you have to buy if your next neighbor buys?"

She says, "Well, in the plantation my husband is bigger classification. You mean to tell me that one lower classification going buy for the wife and you cannot buy for me?"

Because somebody has, you want, but at the beginning if nobody had, nobody wants. That's human nature, I guess so.

WN: You think this is Japanese kind feeling?

TT: I guess so. That's why I usually them this is a samurai, you know. You know when next door, someone be bigger than you. Samurai feeling, I say. Well, I guess everybody has that kind feeling, yeah.

WN: Keep up with the Joneses?

TT: That's right. What makes it easy today to sell appliance and everything is that it's almost a must already, ice box, yeah. It's a necessity now, not a luxury now. It's a necessity. Even TV, it's a necessity now. Even the welfare people can own a TV now. It's necessity. It's not a luxury. But those days ice box and washing machine was really luxury. So, to break the barrier was really a hard thing.

WN: Did you folks go to say the wealthy homes, the haoles, the supervisors' homes to sell this kind of thing?

TT: No, because I don't know. Somehow it's not like today. I think the barrier was there, big gate, you know. Maybe we were thinking that maybe they not going to find...it's a wrong attitude, you know, but I haven't been to those people but eventually we pick up and was all right so a lot of appliances...

WN: When you go out to sell, how would you sell it? Would you carry something, pictures or something?

TT: That's right, pictures, brochures, but in my experience, anything small like vacuum cleaner or anything, you had to bring the merchandise to sell. You cannot read out dollars and cents on a piece of paper, but we take a big washing machine, you cannot carry but the rest is all that you have to let them feel it.

WN: When you go out and take orders on something like dry goods, you know, material, how would they know?

TT: They used to cut a corner. They used to get a patch and they show it to them. But actually it's not a nice presentation, you know. It's not like seeing a whole piece. If it's a big pattern, you only see really one-fourth of the pattern. When we used to go out and take order, we used to have in our pocket a sample of the cloth. You take like denim number 1 or number 2 or khaki or those things, we hardly took samples. They all knew already, but printed dress material, we used to carry a sample along. On a sample, it's hard to come back and match so on the bolt, we used to put number. If it's number 1, and then if this sample is, we put number 1 so you don't have to look at the pattern or anything because a lot of patterns look alike. So what we used to do was put number so that you don't get mixed up.

WN: And you would know all the prices already?

TT: Yeah, because on the pattern we put the prices already. The price is how much a yard.

WN: Where did Paia Mercantile get its goods from?

TT: Mostly from Honolulu. They used to get a lot of....order takers, same thing like order takers in Honolulu like Hiyama, Terada Shōten and then Sumida, Fujii, you know, American Factors, [Theo. H.] Davies. Those days merchandising was altogether different. Like Davies would get certain line of merchandise, American Factors would get....they carry two entire line of merchandise, you know.

WN: Like what would Davies have?

TT: Davies used to carry Del Monte lines at one time.

WN: Oh, grocery.

TT: Grocery. And American Factors used to get mayonnaise and cream. You cannot buy from Davies, see. They carry different line. Today, everybody selling everything, you know. Merchandising has changed a great lot those days and today.

WN: How about the dry goods?

TT: Dry goods?

WN: Where did that come from?

TT: They used to come from Von Hamm Young and then they had all kinds of different wholesalers on that line, too. Some comes every other month, some comes three times one year. American Factors used to have, too. Davies used to have, you know. They come, they bring samples, patch, and then you order. By the time that thing comes, you forgot what you seen and what you ordered. (Laughs)

WN: How long did you have to wait?

TT: Those days used to be I think the boat used to come in twice a month, no, twice a week because those days was entirely on the boat, see. No air cargo or anything. One unique part of that thing I still remember is that right after payday, most of our salesmen [order takers]--especially Filipino salesmen--Japanese never used to go--we used to send them down to the wharf, you know, to catch these people who owe us who run away. We used to send them till Lahaina.

WN: You mean people used to leave this plantation and go to Lahaina and work?

TT: No, they used to catch the boat from Lahaina and go to Hilo or Honolulu and then from Kahului we had to go down there to watch so that they don't run away. But somehow they run away, you know. They owe you money, they run away, because those days employment is easier to find. Plantation need plenty people, you know. All was nothing mechanical. Today you don't need men but any business.... that's why they had a lot of camps because they don't have to transport a lot of people to go to work. Now they centralize everything because transportation is easy but those days, no, that's why even Puunene they used to have plenty small camps all over the place. I know they used to start out about 4:30 in the morning to go to work when they start about 7:00. They have to walk, go down to the train depot, then after that the trucks came out so they didn't have to wake up that early.

WN: Who did Paia Mercantile let charge? I mean, anybody could charge?

TT: Well, the boss doesn't know how to screen the people so they got take the word of the salespeople. They have no way of knowing. They figure as long as they work, all right, but the thing is they can work little while and then take off. Kompany people wasn't too bad. They don't run away like day workers. You have to have some day workers patronize too, because you have to get cash, too, in order to operate your store.

WN: Yeah, but day workers, they charge, too?

TT: Yeah, yeah, so we collect at payday because you have to get some cash, too. I just wondering now, yeah, those days people used to pay only five dollar poll tax and gee, I never know about income tax if people paid or what but I don't know how much I used to pay but for the County only five dollars per head. Of course, they don't---to me, they maintain almost as much road as now. They haven't got any more new roads but they sure---well, a lot of time they didn't have that overhead expense at the office, anyway. I still remember that our--what they used to call him now--not the mayor, the chairman...

WN: County Chairman.

TT: County Chairman, Mr. Sam Kalama, he was the chairman, he was the road overseer, he was the surveyor. Now, every section you have overseers, and whatnot. Those days, didn't have, so running expense was cheap, too, I guess.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 7-72-1-80; SIDE ONE

WN: So even if somebody just started working for the plantation they could charge at Paia Mercantile?

TT: Well, as long as the salesman, you know, the guy that takes orders says, "This is a good guy, he been working so long." The people in the office doesn't know whether, you know, got no way of checking it.

WN: So it was up to the salesman [order taker] to say?

TT: Yeah, that's right.

WN: So what did someone have to---what kind of information did they have to give the salesman [order taker] in order to charge?

TT: I guess they get the information from their friends, you know, but as I say the deadheads--we know who the deadheads anyway. (Laughs) In any business, the guy that doesn't have money usually mingles with the guys that doesn't have money. Just like a schoolteacher being around mostly with schoolteachers.

WN: But to charge they had to go by bangō?

TT: Yeah, by plantation bangō--all plantation bangō.

WN: What about non-plantation people? Could they charge?

TT: Oh, yeah, they used to. Some people that lives in Lower Paia, like that, they used to extend credit. Bangō or no bangō doesn't guarantee you anything anyway.

WN: Collection time could you go to the plantation and give 'em the bangō and tell 'em this guy didn't pay or something like that?

TT: No, you have to have prior arrangement and I don't know. That way we didn't try because they [customers] already have account with the plantation too, so, you know. Sometimes we used to have assignment, you know, assignment of payroll paycheck to the company. The check come to you but you cannot cash it because they don't have it endorsed yet, but they have to come over there and at least they got to pay you or give you good reason why they cannot pay.

WN: So you folks cashed plantation checks too?

TT: We used to, yeah.

WN: Getting back to the question of wholesalers, did you folks deal with any Maui wholesalers?

TT: Oh, in Maui used to have . . . A&B [Alexander & Baldwin], Theo H. Davies used to have their office here, Maui Dry Goods and there were some smaller wholesalers.

WN: Did you folks deliver and take order with all types of ethnic groups or mostly Japanese?

TT: We had Japanese, Filipinos, Portuguese, some Hawaiians. We have some Puerto Ricans, but at that time the population was mostly Filipino and Japanese, anyway. Puerto Ricans, very few Chinese. Being a plantation thing, very few Chinese. Chinese were mostly congregated in towns, cities.

WN: You folks had some Filipino salesmen and some Japanese salesmen [order takers]?

TT: Yeah, that's right.

WN: The Filipino salesmen, would they just go to Filipino homes?

TT: Yeah, mostly Filipino, yeah. Japanese used to go to Japanese or Portuguese or, you know, other nationality, their friends. Like Filipino, too, if they find their friends recommend, they take orders. But one unique part of it---I still remember payday lot of times I used to go meet them in the camp and which I told my boss I didn't want to go because I was so young yet, I don't want to be that much responsible. They collect the money, put in the envelope and then [see] how much in there and then I check. I sign for it and then we used to bring the money home before 5:00, 5:30 before it gets dark and this payday time they used to stay sometime until about 7:00, 8:00, you know, to collect and they're afraid to hold that much money, too, so I used to go around and take and bring home, see. That's something different, you know. It's something like the armored cars are doing now but in an awkward way, yeah, so what I used to do is I used to put little bit in my pocket and the rest I put in the car, here and there, so that if people should stop me, that much money I got. The rest, I never used to carry box or anything. I put under certain place or if I get the box, I put inside the box.

WN: So you used to cash the checks?

TT: No, yeah, lot of people early part there wasn't anything as check--all cash. Payday is all cash, no checks. They pay all in cash, so we get too much cash so everybody knows that you get cash so before it gets dark I used to go around, pick up that and hide and I supposed to come home. I didn't want to hold in my pocket and I didn't---maybe I put \$100 or so in my pocket so if they stop me, I got money but the rest I used to hide it in the car. That was one unique part that we had before, put some money inside the engine part.

(Laughter)

TT: So if they stop you, you get robbed of all the money if you just put it [all] in your pocket or if you carry valise and put the money inside there, they going take the valise, so we used to hide it in the car. Yeah, when you look back we did a lot of, in comparison to now, some awkward ways, you know, but at that time was supposed to be fairly good, I figure.

As far as those days recreation, like that, was almost nil. More toward the end radio was about the best thing out. Aside from that, nothing else. At that time more people read books than ever. Today, hardly anybody reads books, I guess. Why should they read. They watch TV, radio, stereo. They want music, but I don't know. I really think that I used to enjoy---coming back to that again, every now and then they used to get play--shibai--that's a wonderful thing. The whole family goes, take a big space, you bring shichirin, you watching the play and then cooking and eating.

WN: Where is this?

TT: Theatres.

WN: Up Kaheka?

TT: We had to come to Lower Paia.

WN: So was outdoors then?

TT: No, indoors.

WN: You used to have your shichirin inside?

TT: Yeah.

WN: And you'd sit on the floor?

TT: Sit on the floor, yeah. No more chairs those days. You got to sit on the floor so we got to bring goza or something and then your family or your friends supposed to get together and sit down. Those are the things you don't have it often so you enjoy.

WN: How often would you folks come down?

TT: Maybe once or twice a year. That's why you enjoy it, you know. If you can come down everytime, you wouldn't enjoy it.

WN: Yeah.

TT: So any kind gathering used to be enjoyable because you have nothing else to do. Today you have too many things to do. Since you get so many things, you don't have to enjoy it already.

WN: When you were working for Paia Mercantile, what stores were the chief competitors of Paia Mercantile?

TT: You mean in the camp?

WN: Well, in the whole area?

TT: Well, to begin everybody had to buck against Paia Store. Then in about equal size, Onishi, Kobayashi, Japanese Mercantile and Maui

Shōkai and of course Ikeda never used to---Kahului Ikeda never used to come Paia. These were all the stores and then later on we had in Lower Paia we had the Yamato Store, we had Zane Store, we had Economy Store, Nagata Store. Small ones, they had Horiuchi, Kodama, Kakiuchi, long ago.

WN: This is mostly for groceries?

TT: Well, at that time most of the stores not only grocery. They carry little leather gloves, little of socks, you know.

WN: How about Ikeda's?

TT: Ikeda [Satoki Ikeda, another interviewee] was originally on the Hana Highway. Then they move over there [i.e., the present location on Baldwin Avenue], they went into manufacturing more, manufacturing and retailing outlet. They all right, yeah. He used to be salesman for trucks before. He made money.

WN: Yeah, Maui Motors, huh?

TT: Yeah, he used to sell so damm much that he used to let them make the truck body before he sell the car to pineapple people. That's how he got start. One time Lower Paia used to get lot of businesses, you know. Fish market, they used to get about three fish market; barber shop, used to get about four, five; service station, about eight; pool hall, about four; laundry, about two.

WN: This was in the 1930's?

TT: No, 1950's. The 1940's and 1950's. We had two photographers. One time, in fact, we had about four, I think. Photographers did well during the war.

WN: Oh, because of the soldiers?

TT: Yeah. They all come over here and they want to take picture and send it home. Especially during the war lots of people was all right. Liquor store was all right. They couldn't sell to the soldiers but they can sell to the civilians. The civilians used to buy all forming a line. Laundry was---in fact, war time everybody was good.

WN: How did your Paia Mercantile prices compare to other competitors?

TT: Those days was that not that much people was price conscious like today, you know. If they get charge, they let them charge, they figure that was the best thing because they get hard time of comparing the price, too. Of course, most staples like rice, shōyu, flour and all those things, to me wasn't that bad, I think. All about equal prices. Just like today, any price that most of the store, aside from sale, they are about the same markup. When you come to sale, that's different again. And the one different

method of doing business was olden days I notice that nobody sacrificed the good-selling item as come on. What they would make sale on was something old or something that they figure is a slow seller. They used to make cheap sale so the method of business was altogether different, olden days and today. Today you make sale on the best seller for come on. Olden days you would make all special sales on something that you want to get rid of or obsolete things. I never hear of nobody making cheap sale on rice or flour or shōyu.

WN: In one day, say when you were working there from 1927 to the war, about how much would Paia Mercantile gross on the average?

TT: I don't know. That, I don't know.

WN: Who owned the store?

TT: That supposed to be stockholder store, you know, but I think [T.] Hanzawa owned about three-fourths. When they dissolved the corporation, they paid off everybody little bit. That was a limited, Paia Mercantile, Limited.

WN: Uh huh. You said during the war the store did pretty well?

TT: Yeah, was all right.

WN: Did you get more drop-in customers?

TT: Definitely more because everybody was booming. More money than usual and a lot of people figured that why hold the money, spend the money. That's the attitude a lot of people had, you know. That's when a lot of hams or canned fruit, all those things, sold more than ever. They used to buy more better dress materials, too. Lot of women used to make extra money through washing clothes.

WN: Was there less charging then when the war came?

TT: When the war started, 1941, at that time more people were more independent than in the 1929, 1930's or 1940's. They make more money. The kids are grown up so they had more money then than the 1930's or the 1940's. I think those were the hardest times, you know, because a lot of people born in 1912, you know, 10 years, 1922, 1932, yeah, by then the new cycle. Just about time for get married, you know, so the parents had to spend extra money for getting married and everything so I think since the world is round, everything supposed to go in cycles, huh?

WN: So people were less dependent on the charging?

TT: Yeah, because a lot of people were washing clothes for the Marines and they used to make extra money, so at that time lot of families had a little extra money for luxuries so they spent it. One thing I realize that if you give money to the poor people, they not going to save it. They going to spend it. You give money to the rich

guys, they going to save it. So, always give the money to the poor guys. They spend it. Those days hardly anybody thought of investing money. What you got, splurge, you know. Of course, now, everybody is different again. Investment---if you can invest, go invest but there's such a time I had a few bucks in the bank, I never think I was going to borrow money from the bank to go into venture but I had to.

WN: You got your own store?

TT: That's right. I had to. I used to go practically everyday to the bank when I used to work for the [Paia] Mercantile to deposit. One day I ask the bank manager, "I come to the bank everyday for the last how many years and not one time you told me if I need money."

Then, he says, "Oh, we can lend you."

I told him I didn't expect, you know. Jokingly, I told him, then came December, he told me, "Hey Tamasaka!"

I said, "What?"

"When you going borrow money?"

I said, "Why?"

"You told me that you want to borrow money."

I said, "Oh, did I say?" Then, I told my wife the bank said it going to lend me some money. She said, "How much?"

I said, "I don't know, I never ask." So then I went one day. I told my boss, "When I go to the bank, I think I going stay little bit longer."

He says, "Why?"

I said, "He wants to talk to me something about something." I didn't want to say that I want to start a business yet at that time. I wasn't sure.

So he asked me, "Come inside, sit down. How much money you need?"

I said, "I don't know how much money I need."

"What do you intend to do?"

I said, "Well, I get a property in Kuau so I was thinking that maybe I should make a store there because all my life I dream that I wanted to own a small store."

So he says, "Well, we can see how it goes." He says, "You own that land there?"

I said, "Yeah, I own the land."

He said, "How much you want to borrow?"

I said, "That, I don't know. I haven't even thought of what kind of building I going to put and what I going to do yet."

So he says, "Well, you let me know when you get the idea."

So I have a friend down here who is a carpenter, see, so I told him, "Hey, maybe I should make a store."

He said, "That's a good idea." He cannot get job, too, so he tell me, "That's a good idea." So he tell me, "How big you want to make?"

I said, "Well, if I going to make a store, you wait, I going Honolulu first."

He said, "What you going Honolulu for?"

"Oh, I going Honolulu to see what kind store, what kind building they get around there." So I told my wife, "You and me we go down Honolulu go look." Then I called my boss and get about three, four days day off so I like go to Honolulu.

He said, "What you going do?"

I said, "I like go look for building."

"What kind building?"

I said, "Small store building."

So at that time he told me, "Well, you work for me long time. If any other thing you was unsatisfied with me, I will match him but since you are going on your own, that, I no can do nothing." So he tell me "Go."

So, I went and we went all around look. Something similar to this I saw so then I came back and I didn't know whether to make it with wood or hollow tile. At that time nobody had hollow tile building yet. I saw something like this so I came back and I told my contractor to make with tile. He tell me, "Oh, if earthquake, the bugga not going be solid, you know." But at that time I didn't know any better. All on top, all in front is solid, you know. I could have make it at half of the price, I think, if I made all with hollow tile but at that time I didn't know. The building cost me about ten grand [\$10,000], I think. So he said, "Ten grand enough?"

I said, "Ten grand not enough." I tell the bank, "If I need ten grand for the building, what I going sell, air? I got to put

something inside." So he let me some more so I said, "All right." Then I told my wife, "We got to work hard. We got to pay this back in certain year because my kids going to grow and if they want to go University, by then I have to pay up this building because I cannot be paying for this building and let the kids go University." After we started, then I tell my wife, "You and the kids watch the store. I go out salesman [order taker]. Whatever we make extra, we pay for the note." So actually I paid off the building before my oldest daughter started to go to University so I tell my wife, "We were lucky, we were in line with our plans."

WN: So when you started Kuau Store, was it cash and carry?

TT: No, and those days you cannot survive by cash and carry. I had to go take order. I had to muscle in Paia Mercantile customers, Japanese Mercantile customers and everybody, too.

WN: So you went up to the camps?

TT: That's right because those days wasn't cut out for cash and carry yet. The first cash and carry store that came out on Maui was [Kan] Ooka. I talked to him and he told me that business from now on, you cannot wait for the people to pay you. You got to exchange the merchandise. You get one can soda here that somebody take out, you got to get the money to replace the thing because if you go on credit all the time, you take this, to replace you got to put your money there, hoping this bugga will pay you and put your money in your pocket. If this guy runs away, your money is minus already. At that time I didn't have cash, I couldn't go cash and carry because I didn't have customers so I had to muscle in somebody's customers but by then mostly I know who was reliable even if they buy little bit by little bit. I rather get the money because that was the biggest problem for me--money. So even I left over there, we were the best of friends with Paia Mercantile.

WN: Uh huh. How long did you go take order and delivery before you started cash and carry?

TT: Well, it died off little by little because the Paia camp, Kaheka camp I didn't go to Keahua and way other side, I went only to Kaheka, and Paia camp and Lower Paia, you know, and it started phasing out when the people started moving to Kahului. Even in Paia, I have one family yet, every week I call him up and I deliver for him because he bought from me when I beg him to buy so I just don't want to drop him off. Until he moves out or he says, "Don't come", I still going. Lot of people say, "All that trip only for one guy?"

I say, "Well, one guy but I beg for his business and he gave me, stick on till now. Even one guy, I don't want to drop him off." So I still---every Thursday morning I call him up and in the afternoon I deliver for him, after I close the store.

WN: He charge or he pays you cash?

TT: He charge but end of every month, he pays. I have only about three that charge, that's all.

WN: So when did you start to think that cash and carry is a better way to run a store?

TT: Well, I knew that would come one day but I didn't have the money, you know, and I didn't have enough walk-in trade. My concern was that to finish up and pay my note before my kids start going college. If they want to go college, I didn't want to deny them, see, but only my daughter went. The boys all went to--what you call--two went to technical school. They sheet metal [workers] now and the youngest one went to Honolulu Business College.

WN: What would say the big difference is between how you run a store now and how Paia Mercantile was run?

TT: Well, before to me, people had more faith in each other. They trust more and that goes for two ways, I figure, because like Paia Mercantile---that's the only reason even small store before, lot of small stores, they used to carry little of pants or working shirt, you know, BVD's, couple pairs of shoes so they have 100 percent customers. They don't buy from nobody but from you so in other words you have to treat them that way. But today business, you don't find that. They move from store to store as long as---even if you give one slap on the head, if it's cheaper than anybody else, they'll take it. That's the kind business today is. Olden days, no, you trust them, especially the Portuguese like that, too, they buy everything from you. They don't buy from nobody else. I see a lot of difference today in merchandise. Before, if you specialize in anything, you cannot make a go. I don't think you can make a go but today, if you don't go specialize, you can't make a go because you got to carry so many different lines. Before, you got the dress or shoes, as long as the shoes fit you, they don't care what kind style. They wear the shoes till that thing get a hole in it. Today, you buy a shoes today and then six months later the style is out, they buy another pair. So I think merchandising is altogether different.

WN: What other differences do you see?

TT: The buyers are smarter today, too. You want certain things, you ask for that and period. Olden days, no, everything is substitute. If you don't find black shoes, you wanted the black shoes but you don't have the size, you take the brown. You got no alternate, take the different color.

WN: You mean there's no such thing as a customer---if you don't have black shoes, they go to another store?

TT: No, no, no. They cannot buy, they got to charge. The other store doesn't charge you. You don't have the cash so in order to maintain a good relationship, you have to carry all kind things. Today, if

you carry all kind things, you cannot carry all different sizes and different colors and different styles so they go to the specialist so it's two different ways of merchandising now.

WN: Well, do you have any last observations or changes that you've seen?

TT: Everywhere the changes have taken place now.

WN: So how long do you intend to keep on working or maintaining your store?

TT: Well, just like my son says everytime, "Dad, when are you going to retire."

I say, "I'm halfway retired. You people tell me come down tomorrow, I come down." I said, "If you want me to retire, why don't you make me a list, Monday what I should do, Tuesday what I should do."

He said, "You love your plants. Why don't you go fool around your plants."

I says, "That's harder work than I stay inside the store. In the store, I got a lot of people come in and talk story. I get mainland tourists come, they talk about mainland, they want to know about here and we exchange ideas." I said, "I'm happy. I get the happiest time now. Every morning I wake up, I willing to go to open the store because I have freedom." If I want to go to Kahului, I tell my wife to please watch the store for me and I go to Kahului. I go down there, I go eat lunch with my friends and what more do I need. I work little bit. If I make few extra dollars, I go take a trip or I come see you people. So I told my children, "I still got to stay 20 years more."

They say, "Why?"

I say, "I like to see the year 2000 and if I live till 2000 and three days, three days after New Year, I don't care. I served my purpose already." (Laughs)

They say, "You mean to say you're going to stay that long and bother us?"

I say, "I got to watch you guys yet." (Laughs) So I just came back. I went to the credit union annual meeting and I stayed with them. I had dinner with them and we talked story and on May 10th, we have to go down again. My granddaughter's birthday.

WN: Go down to mainland?

TT: Honolulu. All my children in Honolulu. Nobody in mainland.

WN: Well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and
STOREKEEPERS of
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

June 1980